

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING

Monday, August 9, 1999

Present: June Bailey, James Johnston, Joe McLeland, M.S. Mitchell, Leon Robinson, Andy Schlapp

Absent: William Sanders

Also Present: Barbara Yarnell, Botanica; Marilyn Mosteller and John Firsching, Botanica Board of Trustees; Susan Erlenwein, Sedgwick County Department of Environmental Resources; John Philbrick, Property Management Office; Blaise Plummer, Law Department; and Larry Hoetmer, Janice McKinney and Maryann Crockett (Staff)

AGENDA

First Vice President Mitchell called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. The minutes of the regular meeting of July 12, 1999, and Special Meeting of June 28, 1999, were reviewed. The minutes of the Special Meeting of June 28, 1999, were corrected to read that the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. Both sets of minutes were approved.

1. **Botanica Expansion**. Mitchell referred board members to a map of the proposed expansion area attached to the agenda as Exhibit A. He commented that the proposal included part of the area that is currently being used as an exercise trail.

Marilyn Mosteller gave a brief history of the item stating that Botanica first approached the Park Board with the concept of expanding the gardens in 1991. She said Botanica's Long-Range Planning Committee was looking at plans for ten years and beyond. She introduced Barbara Yarnell, Botanica Director.

Barbara Yarnell stated that the garden hosts thousands of visitors each year from all over the world. She said several ideas being discussed were the addition of a children's garden and an oriental or Japanese/Chinese type garden. She said Botanica would like to insure that the proposed expansion area was reserved in order to develop specific plans and time-lines for future development. She reviewed the area noting the possible location of future parking lots and existing utility (water) lines. She said Botanica was eager to work with both the Park Department and Water Department to insure that future development addressed the needs and concerns of all organizations in the area. Mosteller briefly mentioned Amidon Street, which currently divides the proposed expansion area from the gardens. She said Botanica would like to have an agreement that they have future rights to use the proposed expansion area.

Mitchell requested that board members be provided a more precise map of the proposed expansion area and that this item be placed on the September agenda for further discussion.

2. **Lease Agreement – Pawnee Prairie Nature Center.** Mitchell referred board members to a map of the inside of Pawnee Prairie Nature Center attached to the agenda as Exhibit B. Susan Erlenwein, Director, Sedgwick County Department of Environmental Resources, showed the Board slides depicting the layout of each room. She explained current space utilization and proposed future uses. She gave a brief history stating that three years ago, Sedgwick County entered into a lease agreement with the City for a portion of the nature center. She reviewed slides of the inside of the building including improvements made by Sedgwick County. She also provided information on environmental resource programs and copies of program brochures, a map of the park nature trail and other public service/consumer information brochures on recycling and yard waste.

Erlenwein explained that in January, 2000, the Sedgwick County Department of Environmental Resources would be expanding to include five more people. She said their proposal was to lease the North wing of the center currently being used by the Park Department for facility rentals. She said the proposed lease agreement the Park Department offered was \$8.00 per square foot (1,300 square feet) or \$10,400.00 per month. She said in addition Sedgwick County would pay the entire utility bill for the facility.

There was discussion concerning displacing the groups that currently rent the facility on a regular basis. Staff commented that the CPO group had moved to the Westlink Library until the Auburn Hills Club House was completed, which was projected to be spring of 2000. Staff said they would notify the various groups involved and try to relocate their activities. Erlenwein mentioned possible use of the Sedgwick County Extension Center, but did not have information on comparison pricing. There was also mention of the advantages of having a full-time presence at the center/park in terms of cutting down on vandalism and other unwanted activities.

On motion by McLeland, second by Robinson, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to recommend that the City lease the remainder of the Pawnee Prairie Nature Center to the Sedgwick County Department of Environmental Resources under the terms of the current lease agreement.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Vacant Lots at Tyler and Maple.** McLeland reported that he had been in contact with representatives from Mennonite Housing and that their initial asking price for the property was \$116,000; however, that was negotiable. Larry Hoetmer reviewed a conceptual plan for the property for the new board members.

On motion by McLeland, second by Bailey, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to recommend that the City enter into negotiations with Mennonite Housing for acquisition of the property for park purposes.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- **Exhibit Construction – Great Plains Nature Center.** Board members reviewed the “Statewide News Release” attached to the agenda as Exhibit C. Staff briefly reviewed the

item and gave background information on the natural disaster that destroyed most of the exhibit hall displays.

- **Grove Park Development Plan.** Staff reported that Savoy Ruggles and Bohm had started surveying the site. Mitchell briefly reviewed the item for the new board members saying that the project began as a joint effort by a variety of community and private organizations and groups including the Augusta branch of the National Guard. He said the City Council had approved funds in the Park Department budget to hire a consultant to develop a plan for the park. Bailey requested that staff provide McLeland, Schlapp and Johnston copies of the proposed plan, minutes of previous Park Board meetings and background information on the project. She reported that one of the plan recommendations was to construct an additional road into the park from Hillside, creating a circular boulevard through the park. She said currently there was a safety issue with having only one entrance/exit to the park, which was Grove St.

There was brief discussion concerning scheduling a retreat for new board members to familiarize them with the Grove Park Plan and other park projects.

- **Cowskin Channel Cleaning.** Staff reported that the project was proceeding and that City and County agencies were working together to accomplish the clean up.
- **Property South of Cypress Park.** John Philbrick, Property Management Director, reported that staff was in the process of inquiring about possible land acquisition south of Cypress Park, across from the Police Sub Station, to help relieve congestion and parking problems. He said several alternatives were being explored in lieu of purchasing property, including the following: 1) talking to the Girl Scouts about the possibility of expanding their parking lot immediately East of the Sub Station and Southeast of Cypress Park for joint agency use. He said it appears there is room for about twenty-four more parking spaces; 2) expanding into Cypress Park for one row of parking spaces. He said this approach would cause very little impact to the park and added that the City had encountered a similar situation at the South Police Sub Station when they expanded the parking lot into Herman Hill Park; and 3) negotiating with Joe Lee to purchase a lot across the street.
- **Donation of refrigerator by former Park employee.** Staff referred board members to a letter to Boyd Fogg, retired Park Department employee. They said although he is retired, he has remained active in his support of the Park Department and park programs. Mitchell suggested that the Board also send a thank you letter.

On motion by Bailey, second by McLeland, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that staff draft a thank you letter for Mitchell's signature.

OFF THE AGENDA ITEM

- **Restrictive Covenant – Brooks Landfill.** John Philbrick, Property Management Director, said he had a request that the Park Board approve a Restrictive Covenant for the post-closure use of Brooks Landfill. He said pursuant to Kansas Administrative Regulations, any landfill where solid waste will remain in place after closure must have a Restrictive Covenant recorded restricting the use of the facility to a variety of uses that will not penetrate the vinyl

cap over the landfill. He said examples of uses allowed were green spaces, pastures, and certain storage. He said it is an administrative requirement since the property is in the name of the Board of Park Commissioners.

Mitchell requested that Philbrick explain the difference between land acquired before the Park Board changed from an administrative/autonomous board to an advisory board. Philbrick briefly reviewed the item explaining the difference in the deeds.

On motion by Bailey, second by McLeland, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to approve the restrictive covenant and authorize the First Vice President to sign.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Possible Acquisition of Meyers Nursery.** John Philbrick, Property Management Director, said the Water and Sewer Department was looking at the possibility of acquiring Meyers Nursery and two other parcels near the south sewer plant as buffer areas around the plant. He referred board members to a map and explained the location of the sites. Philbrick explained that the purpose of the acquisitions were to prevent development around the plant.

There was also discussion concerning a thirty-seven acre parcel around Gardener Lake. Bailey gave Philbrick a point of contact for further information on possible acquisition. She mentioned the need for park acreage in South Wichita.

On motion by Bailey, second by Robinson, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to recommend that the City pursue acquisition of the thirty-seven acre parcel for park purposes.

OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED

- Mitchell requested that the Board be provided a status report on the Northeast "Stryker" Soccer Complex at the September meeting.
- Mitchell reported that a very successful Mid Continent Tennis Tournament was held at the Ralph Wulz Riverside Tennis Center July 30, 31 and August 1. He also mentioned the concert in Central Riverside Park on Sunday, August 8.
- Mitchell asked staff when the Board could expect a financial report? Staff reported that the report would be furnished as soon as it was available.
- Johnston mentioned that the lights were out at the McAdams tennis center; that it seems to be an on-going problem; and that he would like the name of a staff person he can contact directly about the situation.
- Mitchell stated that outside restrooms (Pawnee Prairie Park in particular) were not being maintained at a level that the public deserves. He reminded the Board that security and maintenance were the two issues the public thought were most important in the survey conducted a few years ago and in the more recent Facility Consultant Report.

- Mitchell requested a status report on Schell Park soccer. Staff reported that the youth league had not yet played at the park.
- Bailey invited board members and staff to the annual Wichita Independent Neighborhoods Say Thanks event at Central Riverside Park on Sunday, August 15, 1999, from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:05 p.m.

M.S. Mitchell, First Vice President

ATTEST:

Maryann Crockett, Clerk